A new regional investment aid scheme is under development under the new GBER from 2014.

The scheme is multisectoral and could also support projects that include activities related to processing of agricultural products in compliance with art. 1, para.3, c) of the GBER.

The scheme does not contain conditions that can fall under letters i) and ii) of Art. 1, par.3, c):

* the aid is not fixed on the basis of the price or quantity of such products purchased from primary producers or put on the market by the undertakings concerned and
* the aid is not conditional on being partly or entirely passed on to primary producers;

During the designing phase of the scheme some questions emerged. They are related to the interlinked reading of some State aid provisions in:

1. the GBER (the General provisions, and Art. 13-14)
2. p. 15 of the EC Decision on case SA.38667 (2014/N) — the Regional aid Map Bulgaria 2014-2020
3. the EU Guidelines for State aid in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas 2014 to 2020 – p. 171, 1.1.1.4., p. 168, a)- c)  and para. 37, (а), p. 2.5.

Taking into account the GBER notification thresholds, we would like to receive the DG Comp clarification on the following questions:

* + - 1. Is there a specific separate requirement for aid under the GBER that is beyond Art. 4, para.1 a) in relation to an individual investment project aided under the regional aid scheme in the case when the project is also linked to processing of agricultural products?
      2. Could we consider as admissible to have some additional and more restrictive requirements for lowering the maximum aid amount and maximum eligible costs for the projects under the regional aid scheme, when the project itself is linked/involving activities for processing the agricultural products (i.e. 12 mln. Euro maximum aid from any source regardless the form and 25 mln. Euro eligible expenditure per project)?

*Thank you in advance for your help and cooperation*

Proposed answer:

1. The notification thresholds laid down in Article 4, para.1 of the GBER apply in principle to regional aid granted for the processing of agricultural products.

2.It is admissible to introduce more restrictive aid ceilings for projects linked with activities for processing of agricultural products as according to the Regional Aid Map “the aid ceilings apply to the processing and marketing of agricultural products only to the extent laid down in the Community guidelines for State aid in the agriculture and forestry.”